



PATENT
Docket No. 52355USA9B.014

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant(s): Bull et al.) Group Art Unit: 1772
Serial No.: 09/759,986) Examiner: **RECEIVED**
Filed: January 12, 2001) **APR 25 2001**
For: MULTI-COMPONENT UNIDIRECTIONAL GRAPHIC ARTICLE **TC 1700**

DECLARATION UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 132

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, DC 20231

Dear Sir:

I, Sally J. Bull, declare and say as follows:

1. I am a named inventor on the above-identified U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/759,986, filed January 12, 2001 which is a continuation of application Serial No. 09/094,896, filed June 15, 1998, entitled MULTI-COMPONENT UNIDIRECTIONAL GRAPHIC ARTICLE.

2. I am furthermore a named inventor on PCT Publication WO 97/43128, entitled PROTECTIVE CLEAR LAYER FOR IMAGES (referred to hereinafter as "the Bull PCT application"), a document cited in support of various rejections in the parent case (the '896 application). As a named inventor, I am aware of the subject matter discussed in this PCT application, including that subject matter found in the "Background" section.

3. I have read and am familiar with the Office Actions of the '896 application dated February 14, 2000, and September 12, 2000, as well as the Advisory Action dated November 28, 2000 (collectively referred to hereinafter as the "Actions"). In view of the rejections made therein, I make this Declaration in support of the patentability of the claims of the present application.

4. The Actions reject various combinations of claims under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious either over Andriash (U.S. 5,679,435) in view of the Bull PCT

application or Andriash in view of the Bull PCT application and further in view of Hiraoka et al. (U.S. 5,776,575). In particular, The Actions state that the "Background" section of the Bull PCT application teaches "an overlamine for an imaged graphic article having a vinyl or polyester film having a scrim next to a hot melt adhesive [where] the scrim is particularly well-suited for avoiding blocking of the layers of hot melt adhesive and [preventing] them [from] undesirably becoming permanently bonded to an adjacent overlamine article which contains adhesive." See Office Action of September 12, 2000, paragraph 4. The Actions allege that "one skilled in the art of graphic articles would look to the teachings of [the Bull PCT application] to use a scrim layer in between a pressure sensitive adhesive layer and a hot melt adhesive layer in order to provide a blocking function in between the pressure sensitive adhesive layer and a hot melt adhesive layer in an imaged graphic article." *Id.*, paragraph 4.

5. However, I believe that those working in the field of graphic articles would recognize from a reading of the "Background" section of the Bull PCT application, as well as from the products noted therein, that the identified portion of the Bull PCT application is describing an overlamine adapted to protect the imaged surface of an imaged substrate from abrasion and ultraviolet light (see e.g., page 1, lines 18-22: "[a]n optically clear transparent overlamine, comprising an optically clear, transparent durable film covered on a major surface by an optically clear, transparent pressure sensitive adhesive, is preferably applied over the image on the durable substrate").

6. The overlaminates described in the Bull PCT application typically have a structure which includes a film (e.g., vinyl or polyester) having an adhesive on only one side. A scrim liner, such as a paper or polyester liner, may be included to cover the adhesive and prevent inadvertent adherence to other surfaces until the overlamine is ready for application, at which point the liner may be removed (see e.g., page 1, lines 25-28: "[s]ome of the clear transparent overlaminates include a vinyl or polyester film covered with a pressure sensitive adhesive," which is in turn "protected by a paper or polyester liner until usage"). Moreover, the portion of the "Background" section of the Bull PCT application that states that other clear, transparent overlaminates may "include a vinyl or polyester film covered with a hot melt adhesive, and a

scrim liner to prevent blocking" (page 1, lines 28-29) describes a vinyl or polyester film having a hot melt adhesive on one side and a removable scrim liner applied to the adhesive to protect the latter until application. To apply the overlamine, the scrim liner is removed and the adhesive side of the article is placed in contact with the graphic article to be protected.

7. Attachment A is included herewith to further illustrate the general structure of the overlaminates discussed in the "Background" section of the Bull PCT application.

8. Based on this information, it is my opinion that one of skill in the art of graphic articles would understand that the overlaminates discussed in the "Background" section of the Bull PCT application are directed to a clear film having an adhesive (either PSA or hot melt) on only one side with a removable liner to protect the adhesive until use.

9. I further declare that statements made herein of my knowledge are true, and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code, and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

Dated: 04/04/01

By: Sally Bull
Sally J. Bull

Declaration under 37 C.F.R. §132

Serial No. 09/759,986

Filed: January 12, 2001

MULTI-COMPONENT UNIDIRECTIONAL GRAPHIC ARTICLE

ATTACHMENT A

